ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

GOING HOME

28

$2.25USA • $3.50CANADA • £1.50UK

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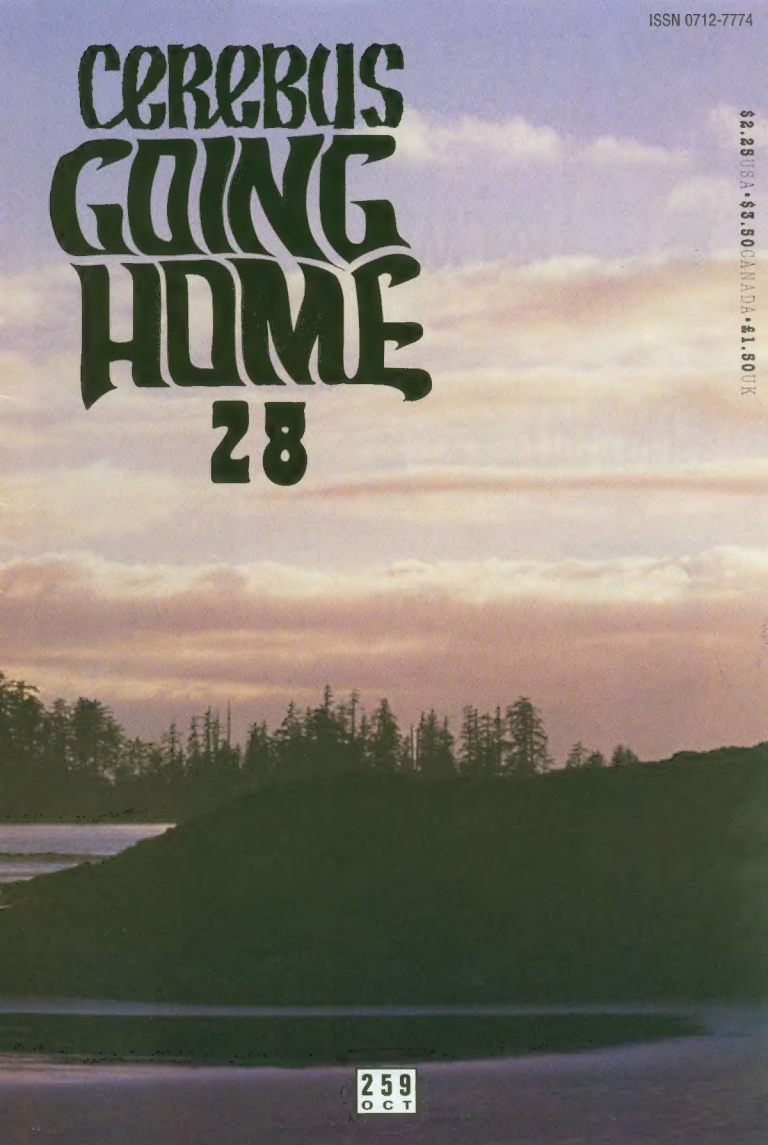

259 OCT

NOW & THEN BOOKS

29th ANNIVERSARY PARTY and/or SIGNING

FEATURING:

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SETH

Dave SIM

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CEREBUS

NO. 259 OCTOBER 2000

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GOING HOME

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BOOK ONE
Sudden Moves
(Cerebus 232 to 239)

•

BOOK TWO
Fall and the River
(Cerebus 240 to 250)

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BOOK THREE
Form & Void
(Cerebus 251 to 265)

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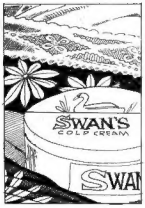
Biz, welcome at the hotel bar at Masindi.

Lots of drinks.

Mrs. Williams kindly brought a bag for me with night things ...

... too nice for dirty, bloody me to wear.



... and cold cream.

We went without dinner (since the dining room closed early) ...

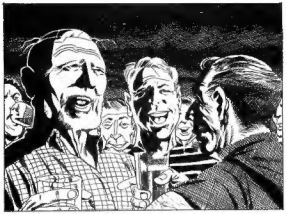
... and ate sandwiches in our room.

McAdam looked at Papa's head.

"Nothing to it, old boy."

"Let's pour some gin on it."

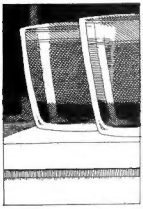
I slept painfully.
Papa coughed a lot.
In the morning, the pillow was soaked with cerebral fluid.
The African doctor came and cleaned us up a bit.
Put bandages on Papa's left ear.
"
"... above which the scalp was suppurating.
"
"... bandaged my knee
"... in the new corner room they'd given us.
I stayed in bed all the next morning.
"
Papa was up and about with the characters.
Obviously not in good shape.
He stayed awake half the night.
A doctor had come to examine Hem.
Ordered a drastic reduction of his alcoholic intake, total rest, and no visitors.



Ham continued his drinking and entertaining.

flip flip flipz

His kidneys were seriously damaged.



The urine samples he keeps in glasses in the bathroom are bright, dark red with an inch of sediment.

The wound on the leg, not good.

Hearing bad in the burned ear.

Eyes bad.

flip flip flip flip flip flip

flip flip flip

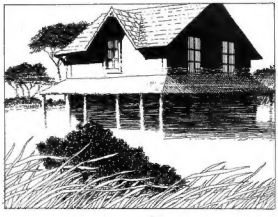
We bid a sad farewell, homeward bound.

Thereupon ...

... a plague began to descend upon us.

An evil miasma

Denis began to feel bad. Feared his old enemy malaria was arriving, for yet another visit.

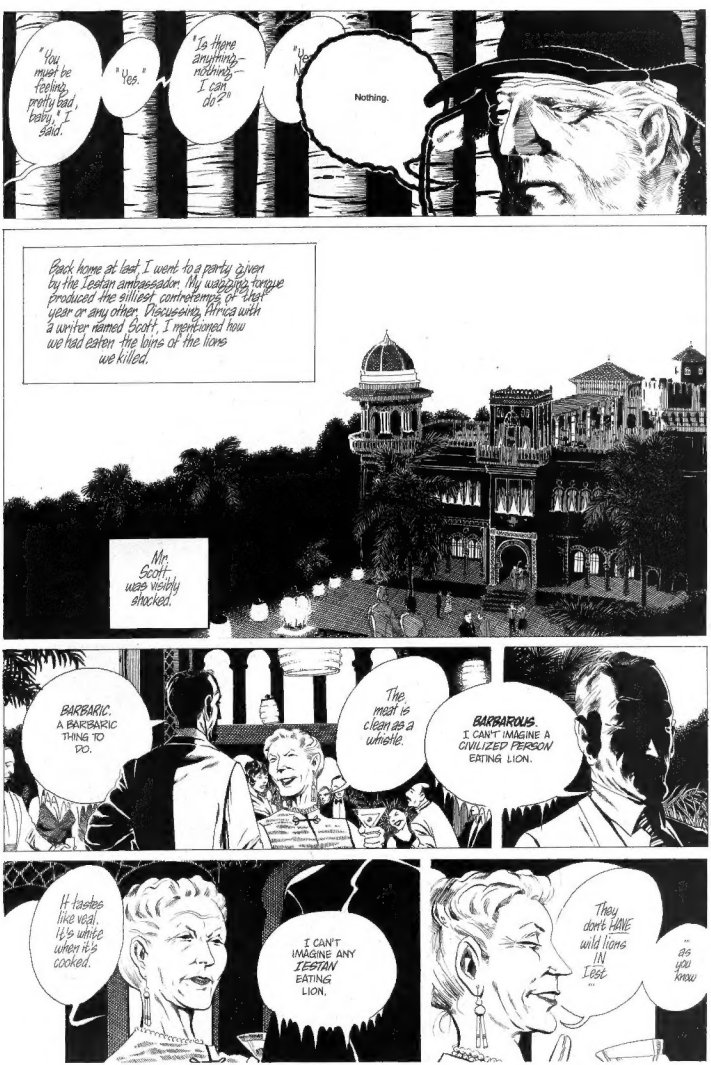


The hot wind became a torment.

Hem took an unreasonable dislike to the dugout canoe.
"...of a neighboring native."
"...and banged away at it."
"...with a piece of driftwood."
"...breaking a seat and a paddle.
For days, he had been talking about"
"...becoming "blood brothers" with his Wakamba friends."
"...among our safari servants.
Got home before sunset.
Papa had started ceremonies"
"...for face-cutting,"
"...and ear-piercing."

A day or two later ...
... Denis and I came in from fishing ...
... to find Ham ...
... sitting in his favorite chair ...
... on the veranda ...
... a mass of raw, burnt, burnt-smelling flesh.
A bushfire had started ...
... and — in the wild wind — had rushed toward us
All our boys had come out to beat it down.
In spite of admonitions, Ham insisted on joining the fire-fighting ...
... fell down ...
... and was aflame before the boys could rescue him

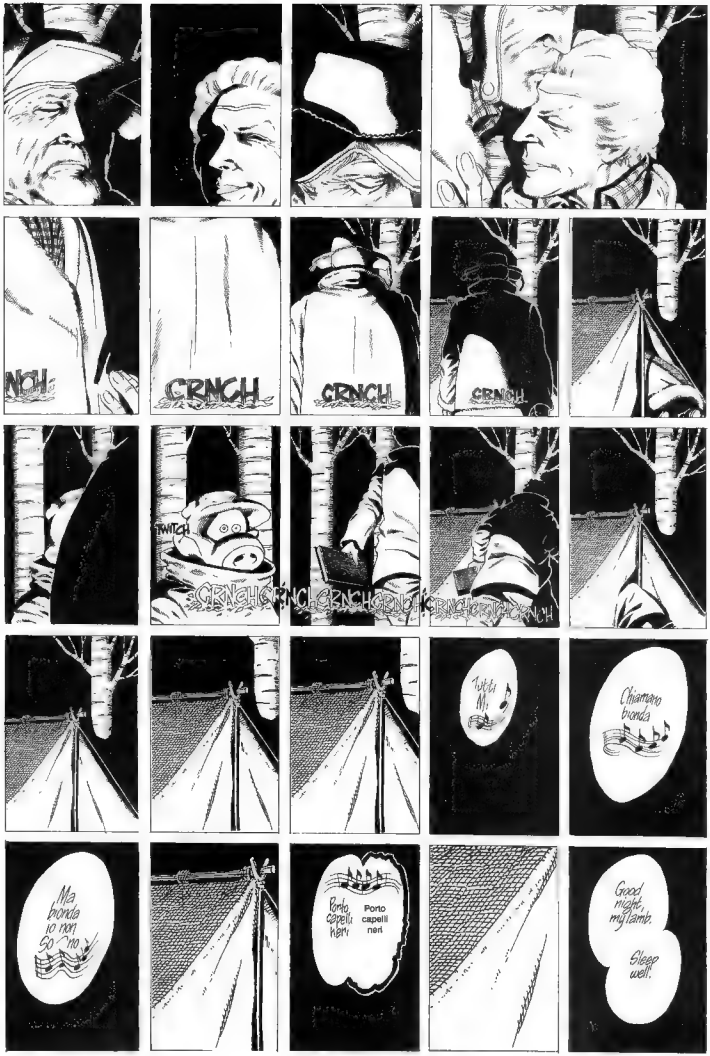
Both his legs, his stomach, chest and chin ...
... looked like raw steak.
His hands and arms like hamburger.
Whatever painkillers Ham took could not long disperse the nightmare of his discomfort or the accompanying ravelling of his nerves.
He tried to ease the situation by being abusive to me.
I ached with sympathy ...
... but promptly arranged a schedule of escaping, soon after breakfast.
I refreshed myself by remembering the loving, friendly phrases Ham had been making, ...
... throughout Africa ...
... before the crashes ...
... and the fire.

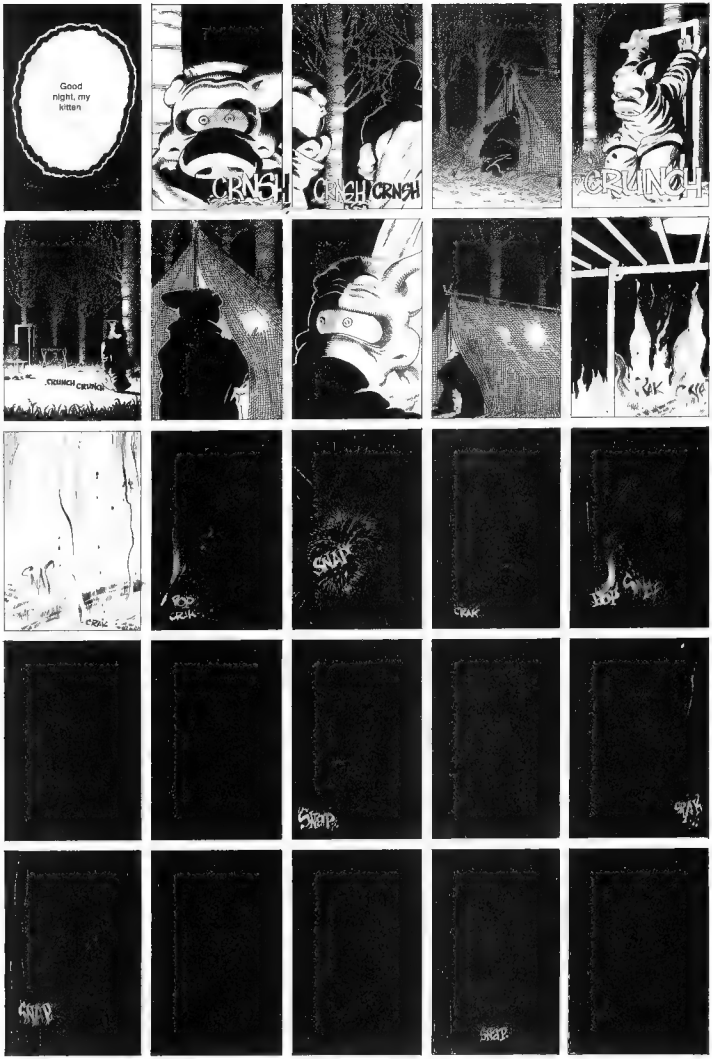

"You must be feeling pretty bad, baby," I said.
"Yes."
"Is there anything— nothing— I can do?"
Nothing.
Back home at last, I went to a party given by the Ieetan ambassador. My wagging tongue produced the silliest contretemps of that year or any other. Discussing Africa with a writer named Scott, I mentioned how we had eaten the loins of the lions we killed.
Mr. Scott was visibly shocked.
BARBARIC. A BARBARIC THING TO DO.
The meat is clean as a whistle.
BARBAROUS. I CAN'T IMAGINE A CIVILIZED PERSON EATING LION.
It tastes like veal. It's white when it's cooked.
I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY IEETAN EATING LION.
They don't HAVE wild lions IN Ieet.
... as you know

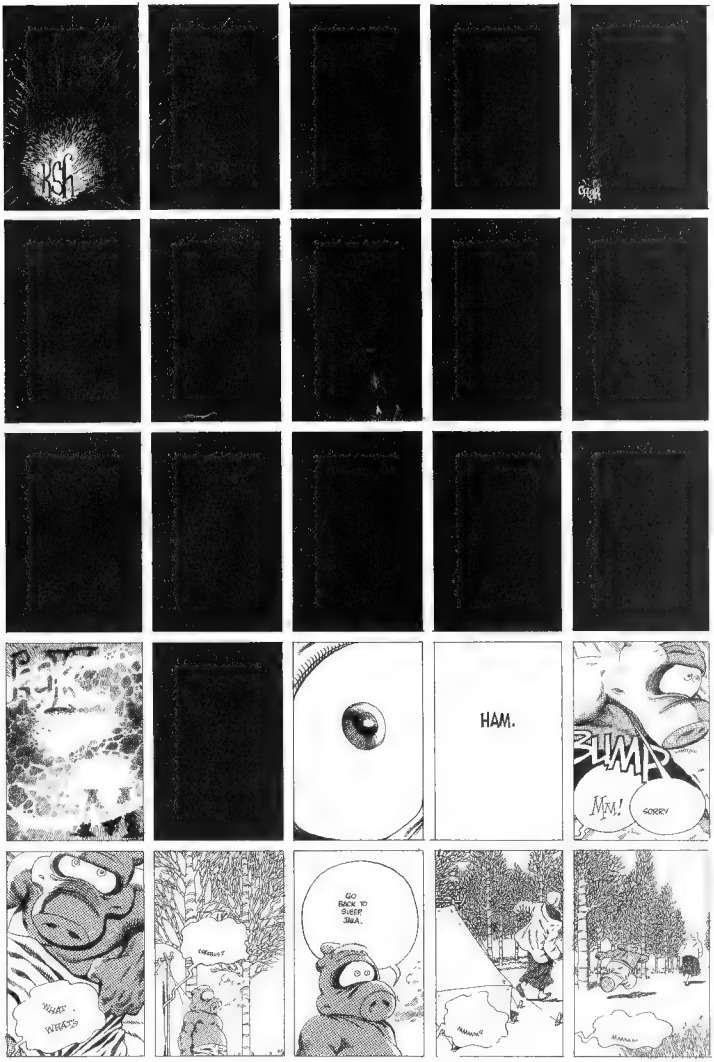
I MEAN MEMBERS OF THE FELDWAR STATES.
Our friends in Konja ate it.
But, of course ...
... THEY're colonels
I thought it was a joke ...
... but Mr. Scott looked about to explode.
You know what they say.
That colonies import MATERIAL things from the Mother countries and PHYSICAL habits ...
... but only the CRUDER mores and BASER philosophies.
I moved away
A few days later, in print, Mr. Scott expressed dismay, disillusion, disapproval and disappointment ...
... either about my earring, Ilon ...
... or my cavalier attitude toward colonials ...
... or perhaps it was both.
Ham was irritated.
Until I murmured such words as

"Childish."
and
"Tempest in a thimble"
Still later ...
... Mr Scott returned to the disenchantments and — in print —
discredited me, repeating his displeasure and distaste and — in a miracle of reversals —
both blamed Ham for my faulty behavior and suggested that either Ham defend my honor with the sword...
... or lose his own good name for appearing to agree with me.
crack
SMAP
SSSSNAP
... something like that.
Dr. Pedro Pessino came to call in his capacity as second for Mr. Scott to present a formal challenge to Ham for a duel
Ham explained that he would make no apologies on my behalf and that he did not

". consider Mr. Scott a suitable opponent for a duel."
"Aside from other considerations ..."
"...my obligation at this time..."
CRNCH
"... is to continue my writing ..."
"... and regain my health."
"If any friends of Mr. Scott's consider that to be ..."
"... an act of cowardice"
"... they are at liberty ..."
"... to think so ..."


NOH
CRNCH
CRNCH
CRNCH
TWITCH
CRNCHCRNCHCRNCHCRNCHCRNCHCRNCH
Tutti Mi
Chiamano bionda
Ma bionda io non so no
Porto capelli neri
Porto capelli neri
Good night, my lamb.
Sleep well.


Good night, my kitten
CRNSH
CRNSH CRNSH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH CRUNCH
CRAK
SNAP
CRAK
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP


KSH
GRGH
HAM.
THUMP
MM!
SORRY
WHAT WAS?
GRRRR?
GO BACK TO SLEEP JAA.
MMMM?
MMMM

I think no wife has
the RIGHT
to deprive her husband
of his
possessions

AMCKUFA.
POR

KAMERAPARTIKEL
LEUNA

TO HAM & HAM NOT

Journal (Friday, November 27, Kimana Swamp) page 176

Just now
P.P. reported
the boys
had
thought he
might be
"Ota Jua" -

dreaming
in the
sun

Mary Hemingway at her creepiest, discussing her feelings about killing the animals:

They get
to be your
enemy

but you feel
sorry when
you kill
them.

You
sometimes
get them in
your own
bumbling
way.

You
get
excited

you
hate
them

and
then you
love them.

Then
you have
compassion.

To me, this foreshadowed the end of the Ham Ernestway segment a little too directly, but I did want to include it somewhere. I'd suggest that those idiots still putting womankind on a pedestal reread these extracts a few dozen times, but I'm not sure it would do much good. On the other hand, it couldn't hurt.

Page 511 - *Journal* (Sunday, Dec. 6, Kimana Swamp) page 188

"By keeping the lionesses fed..."

It does, indeed, seem a "terrible treachery" to use such an "unsporting" means to get a lion out from his protective cover. What Mary seems to overlook is that it is being done because it seems the only way *possible* to get her "her" lion so that there is something left of the safari for someone *else* to hunt something. The whole idea of using part of a carcass to "bait" a predator seems screwy to me, anyway. How can you call that hunting, in any meaningful sense of the term?

Page 514 - *Journal* page 189

"his moving hips..."

Strange spot to draw a bead on, don't you think? Like the granti she bagged when she "shot at his white behind" (see second note for pages 499-500)—one of her very few kills. I'm getting to that. Interesting that the "s" in "hips" was crossed out. As I say, I'm getting to that.

"Everyone said I shot first..."

What is at issue here (I'm not sure if it just applies to safari hunting or if it is a general rule of all hunting) is "continuous pursuit." If you shoot an animal *first*—that is, your shot hits the animal *first*—it is considered your "kill" from that point on. If you track the wounded beast for five hours and someone else actually kills it, it is still considered yours, provided that you have kept up your pursuit. Determinations are made by the caliber of bullet and the freshness of the wounds, from what I can gather.

JFK DIGRESSION

Remember way, way back in these notes when I was talking about "The Short Happy Life of Frances Macomber" and how—having made allowances that it could "just be me"—I found the ending of the story to have strange parallels to the JFK assassination? Stranger and stranger. Here's a paragraph from the December 6, 1953 diary entry:

As far as I know he had three shells in him, one of them mine which entered his right hind flank. Denis' [sic] *heavy 470 sent in one shell which travelled up his spine and after dropping its jacket went through the left lung, turned off the left shoulderblade and ended up in his forearm.*

Call me crazy, if you want, but that sounds like an exact description of the wounds sustained by then-Texas governor John Connally (John Con Ally?) in the jump seat of the limousine that fateful day in Dallas.

****

Page 515 - *Journal* page 189

"We found him about 350 yards away..."

Since the Kennedy Library's photographs EH 2148N and EH 2149N are the only ones which depict Mary Hemingway with a lion (posed—all the way down to her lightly curled index finger—like a Greek statue of Diana of the Hunt), I assume that this is "her" lion, which is (apologies to Lloyd Bentsen) "No Old Imperial." According to Hemingway in *True at First Light*, Charo had said to him, "Bwana, kill the lion and get it over with. No woman ever kills a lion." I think Hemingway took this personally, and it made him more determined than ever that Mary was going to bag a lion. At stake was his own belief, expressed in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber": "...in Africa, no woman ever misses her lion and no white man ever bolts." I think Dennis, Charo, and Ngui (perhaps even Hemingway himself) finally recognized that the level of risk was foolish. Time after time they were getting within proximities a charging lion could cover (from a standing stop) in a little over two seconds: with a would-be huntress who specialized in hitting game animals in the ass. Which (if you ask me) seems exactly the kind of thing which might *provoke* a four-hundred-pound lion to cover just that two seconds of distance and maybe attempt to shave a tenth of a second or so off his previous best record.

I think Dennis shot first, to get the whole ordeal over with; Hemingway shot second because he thought Dennis' shot was Mary's—and Mary shot the already fatally wounded lion in the ass. Or "the right flank," if it makes anyone feel better to have it expressed that way.

"...with the boys singing a marvellous, triumphant-sounding song..."

The celebration begins. As someone said (Mary attributes it to Percival in *How It Was*, but after the lion-tasting episode I have my doubts), "I haven't seen such a celebration as this in twenty years." What Mary didn't know at the time (and what she was not to discover until she read the manuscript which eventually was published as *True at First Light*) was the extent of the *religion* that Ernest Hemingway was endeavouring to start while they were in Africa. According to the book, she was *aware* of the new religion and disapproved of it—but in the way someone would disapprove of "boys will be boys" high jinks. Beer-drinking, as an example, constituted a central ritual of Hemingway's new "faith." Really, it was just another step across the line for the drunkard-typist, the willful transgression of another boundary which was a centerpiece of his life "philosophy," which Lillian Ross documented in her *New Yorker* profile of EH, quoting him as saying:

"Only suckers worry about saving their souls. Who the hell should care about saving his soul when it is a man's duty to lose it intelligently, the way you would sell a position you were defending, if you could not hold it, as expensively as possible, trying to make it the most expensive position that was ever sold. It isn't hard to die." He opened his mouth and laughed, at first soundlessly and then loudly. "No more worries," he said.

Of course, that was in 1950 when there was still—seemingly—plenty of time. But then, it seems to me that that is always problematic in contemplating issues relative to one's own soul: there is always—*seemingly*—plenty of time.

Anyway, Hemingway's new religion was a cobbled-together mixture of Aleister Crowley-like "do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" nonsense, coupled with Gitchie Manitou, the Great Spirit (seriously—Gitchie Manitou), who takes penicillin and goes to Mecca ("as you or I might go to the bazaar"). One of the central articles of faith of the new religion was that it required Miss Mary to shoot a lion before the Birthday of the Baby Jesus.

I think it was when Mary reached *that* point in the manuscript that something switched over in her brain and the myth that *True at First Light* was a "fictional memoir" was born. As with EH's courtship of Debba, I think she just couldn't face the truth—the truth that was shown clearly in the excessively large celebration that followed the killing of "her" lion.

Hemingway's "religion" went beyond the boundaries of bad taste. Kenya, as I mentioned before, is a Christian country with a sizable Muslim minority. Even in the Islamic faith where it is a firmly held conviction that Jesus was *not* the son of God—that it is ridiculous and blasphemous (a view with which I completely concur) to suggest that God has either a partner or offspring—Jesus is revered as one of God's great prophets and messengers. *Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him)* as opposed to *Christ Jesus*. To flippantly incorporate Jesus (Baby or otherwise) into a melange of Gitchie Manitou, beer-drinking, and lion killing...

...well, words really do fail me.

Page 516 - *Journal* page 190

"*...all swirling and singing and banging, me feeling undeserving but loving their kind enthusiasm*, not able to dampen it." [emphasis mine]

Always a problem when "kind enthusiasm" is actually pagan worship, I would guess.

"one voice chanting the newly improvised..."

The next line read:

the black
backs and legs
carrying
running rivers
of firelight

Which is a hell of a nice piece of writing.

Page 517 - *Journal* page 191

"Beginning about noon today..."

The Kennedy Library had a surprisingly good assortment of photos of the Ngoma the next day (most of them, presumably, taken by Mary herself), which were helpful with this sequence. Several of the "boys" looked as if their heads were on fire, which is probably

where the popularity of the "ostrich feather as decoration" came from.

In many of the photos, Papa stands off to one side, overseeing the festivities and (I would imagine) trying his darnedest to look like Gitchie Manitou instead of a fat drunken typist. According to *True at First Light*, Debba was one of the dancers at this Ngoma. I had her narrowed down to two or three possibilities before I realized that there were much better uses for my time.

NATURE

Very much along the same lines as the camp dog "chewing and chewing" outside the Hemingways' tent (see note for page 493), it seems to me that there are many, many instances of such resonances, which prefigure and reflect future and past human events. I wanted to write this preamble to the next section because I think there is a real danger that what I am talking about could be misperceived by the atheistic sensibility (very much abroad in the waning nano-seconds of the 20th century) to be some murky permutation of New Age, wicca, Jungian symbolism, earth worship, or any one or combination of the endless variety of blasphemous misapprehensions of the same ilk. Although it has become more than fashionable to see Nature as an entity unto itself, bounded on one side by the...overenthusiastically menstrual, shall we say?...and on the other by scientists, naturalists, academics, and others of the factual/theoretical and theoretical/factual schools, I would classify my own view of Nature as Islamic. That is, according to the definition of Islam—those who submit to God's Will. Nature, in all its aspects, is under God's jurisdiction and is God's creation, whether you are talking about asparagus, woodchucks, the ozone layer, the rain forest, stars, quarks, quasars, paramecium, or maggots. They were all created by God, and they are all submissive to His Will. As with the part in issue 186 that I wrote about the fly-by of Saturn where one of the rings proved to be braided and the thought had come into my head: "Saturn is saying 'hello' to the DNA." I still believe that. The only layer that has been added is that I believe God *told* Saturn to say "hello" to the DNA (perhaps figuring it was the least He could do if we insisted on wasting all that money).

On a much smaller scale, I believe that the same thing takes place wherever human beings interact with Nature (as opposed to cars and buildings and cities): Nature prefigures and reflects human nature in a variety of ways where human nature—the exercise of free will—takes place in proximity to it.

My point in this preamble is to assert that I consider it blasphemous to ascribe any sentient attribute (free will, thought, personality) to these prefigurations and reflections in Nature and to further assert my belief that the tendency to do so is the exact point where the monotheist and the pagan, the masculine and the feminine, part company and that I (no great surprise) come down firmly on the monotheistic and masculine side of the Great Divide.

All cautionary notes having been struck, let me say that I believe that Nature started behaving strangely in proximity to the Hemingways because the Hemingways were behaving strangely—un-Naturally, so to speak—in proximity to Nature. Particularly strange was the idea of a "huntress of lions," and Nature, according to Mary's Journal, two days after her "kill," bears suitably strange fruit:

Journal (Monday, December 7, Kimana) page 192

> *Our vast front yard turned green last week and now is an enormous plain of flowers spikey white ones like tiny fragile Canterbury bells which fill the air with a fragrance part lily and part rose. With such succulent feed the game is coming in thickly, the Zebra, Wildebeast, the Three Antelope and the Waterbuck.*

In other words (as I read it) Nature extrudes a feast, reflecting the disproportionate celebration which had taken place in Kimana Swamp Camp—*prefiguring* with bountiful greenery and then *reflecting* the culmination of events with a feast of white flowers. Nothing especially alarming in this. A strange reflection of a strange event—except that this is not the end of the prefiguring and reflecting, which, from my reading, reaches a crescendo in Kimana Swamp by December 10th, four days after everyone has agreed that Mary "killed" her lion.

Page 518 - *Journal* (Thursday, Dec. 10, Kimana) page 195

"The hyenas in full concert..."

This (had I been there) I would've found a good deal more worrisome, as the expanding "ripples" move out of the plant world and into the animal sphere. A sudden hyena convention in the vicinity of the camp would not strike me as the best imaginable news, nor would the profuse vocalizations enumerated by Mary be at all reassuring: particularly if I were able to pick out the fact that "one of them was having a change of voice and sang in double tones." Ominous. Under the circumstances, *joining* the laughter doesn't strike me as the wisest choice either, with Nature (evidently) straining to find the proper reflection. I mean, it's not *real* laughter on the part of the hyenas; it's just hyena vocalization. But the *Hemingways'* laughter is participatory and (to me) a bad ripple to send out after the bad ripple they have already sent out: *Mary-the-lion-killer* ripple now pursued by a *vocalizing-with-carrion-eaters* ripple.

Page 519 - *Journal* page 195

"I dreamt of us being marooned..."

After the description of this dream in her Journal, Mary has typed "-this is a restricted area," which I assume referred to a sign visible to her in her dream. It seemed too anachronistic for Cerebus' world, but does seem significant to me when she's just drifted off to sleep from her laugh fest with the hyenas. In a very real sense I think Mary and Papa *were* marooned in a

shining gray sea at this point, metaphorically speaking, and that it *was* in the same sense a "restricted area".

"This afternoon we saw the waterbuck..."

Ger and I divided up the animal drawing chores on "Form & Void." Mary in her *Journal* and in *How It Was* made much of the "noble" and "gallant" waterbuck (anthropomorphizing him in her characteristic female fashion), referring to him as a "paterfamilias to ten cows" that he "guards" as they "escape" (with their "totos") into the woods at the approach of human beings. I had such a vivid mental picture of him, I couldn't wait to draw this panel. Unfortunately, what I pictured was a cape buffalo. When I found out that a waterbuck is just another stupid antelope, I let Ger have him—pencilling in the (facetious) instruction to try to make him look "nice" and "honorable."

In the Nature context that I've been dealing with, the waterbuck seems to represent Nature at its most, well, natural, although I think Mary was projecting an image of polygamous Papa onto him (another bad ripple). What with Mary and Debba and Adriana (or "The Italian Slut," as Mary referred to her later in the *Journal*), that would only leave seven more "cows" to flesh out Mary's anthropomorphic metaphor/delusion.

"The white wild flowers..."

"...still *unidentifiable* in any of my books" [italics mine]. Unidentifiable, I suspect, because they were extruded by Nature in response to a profound strangeness. Profound strangeness=strange flowers.

Page 520 - *Journal* page 196

Hate to go off on a bit of a tangent right in the middle of my Nature series here, but this one was too funny to pass up (once I inserted the setup to the punch line. You know women and jokes):

When Papa and I are alone in the hunting car [with just the natives and no one to translate], *as yesterday, I always appreciate P.P.'s story* [about how the askari say: "Ndio, Bwana"—"Yes, Bwana"—in answer to just about everything "Bwana" says]: *The foreigner to his gun boy: "I bet you think I'm a bloody fool." Boy: "Ndio, Bwana." Papa thinks they understand so much more English or Spanish than they do.*

Okay, back to Nature. Here's a good example (to me) of God's Will beginning to reassert itself in the midst of the unnatural strangeness taking place. Influx of game to the strange flowers? Taking place right underfoot, as a result:

We stopped to watch the shit beetles working, so industriously pushing their balls of dung with their hind feet, full of enthusiasm, back and forth without much objective, like the human race.

Now, where I see God's Will reasserting itself—God created dung beetles for this very purpose: sudden influx of animals, excess amounts of dung, ipso facto, dung beetles—Mary, in typical female fashion, anthropomorphizes the dung beetles. "Industriously"? "Full of enthusiasm"? No. They are doing what God made them to do. When they do it, they do it quickly. They were created that way. *Slow* dung beetles wouldn't solve the problem. It is this anthropomorphizing of lower life forms that, to me, represents the undoing of the pagan, the undoing of the atheist, and the undoing of the female: all of whom, to me, misunderstand Nature's responses as sentient or human instead of simply suited to their purpose as intended by God. At one and the same time, just such a misapprehension seeks to *raise up* a dung beetle to the level of a human being and/or to *lower* a human being to the level of a dung beetle. Neither of which, it seems to me, is a philosophical foundation apt to get one psyched for advancing the human condition, improving civilization, or even getting out of bed in the morning. It is the inevitable atheistic cul-de-sac, the progenitor of nihilism, and the impetus behind psychiatry. In the very next paragraph in her *Journal*, in fact, Mary follows the "party line" in perfect lock step:

Reading Aubrey Menen reminds me that it is ego and a sense of self-importance which convinces men or women that they must have been created for some greater purpose than they have discovered and that there must be some important reason for their existence.

This is the atheistic, nihilistic snake chewing on its own psychiatric tail: "You are a dung beetle, but you are not industrious and enthusiastic as a dung beetle is because you have an ego, and your ego disturbs you by deluding you that you are, in some way, more important than your fellow dung beetles." Implicit but unspoken is the snake-oil salesman underpinning: "The good news for *me* is that you are willing to pay me fifty dollars an hour twice a week for an indefinite number of years to listen to all of your pitiful, little dung beetle problems."

This anthropomorphizing trait in women worsens when you get to house pets.

But...we haven't gotten to house pets yet.

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"I woke weeping in the night..."

This whole section of the Journal—December 7 through 11—made for fascinating reading since there wasn't a word of it that made it into *How It Was*. I mean, not a *word*—reminding me of those occasions when a girlfriend would try to tell me a story that reflected badly on herself, and it was like trying to read a newspaper with fist-sized holes cut out of it. Particularly fascinating because of this little anecdote recounted on pages 451-452:

On October 1, Mayito Menocal, Ernest and I and our gun-bearers were climbing the last hill before the bait-tree when Mayito, two paces ahead of me, shot to our right. Ernest shot and N'zia my gun boy grinned. "Chui, Chui." Twenty paces away a leopard lay dead.

It was a gift from On High for Earl Theisen who, for a long time, had been hoping for the chance to photograph Ernest with dangerous animals for Look. *While I muttered protests—"We don't know whose bullet finished him...This might be Mayito's leopard, exclusively...I don't think you have the moral right, lamb"—Ernest submitted to Ty's arguments and sat on the ground for portraits of himself and the leopard.*

Mayito, if he knew whose slug had killed the young leopard, gave no sign that he cared for any dialectics about it. But the affair became one of the few disputes between Ernest and me during those months. "It's wrong," I contended. "It is moral disintegration and desuetude," I maintained with bombast. Ernest paid little attention to me. "I'll get a leopard to salve your conscience," he said.

"Before Look *publishes the picture?"*

"Sure."

Later in December of 1953, Ernest killed a leopard entirely on his own. Look *published the picture of the leopard at which he and Mayito Menocal had both shot in its issue of January 26, 1954.*

It is almost as if Mary (with that screw-loose approximation of logic that women use) sees the recounting of *her* vehement objections to *Papa* taking credit for the *leopard* as making any admission of *herself* taking credit for the *lion* somehow beside the point or irrelevant. Which (just coincidentally) allows her to convey the impression in *How It Was* that she *did* kill the lion. Amazing. Totally unethical and totally amazing.

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"I said so at lunch."

Now, that must have been one hell of an interesting lunch. If she actually said, flat out, "I feel cheated that you both shot him first and then fooled me about it. I feel heartbroken and frustrated, first that I couldn't shoot well enough. Then, that such a long, sincere, serious, and purposeful pursuit should have finished in such a farce."

...well, *Bravo!*

Aside from the "heartbroken" part, this is very close to the approach that any *man* would take to the situation: direct and factual. Dennis responds in kind: "You were handed a lion on a platter." Direct and factual. How did the conversation proceed from there? We really have only Mary's *interpolation* "...and Dennis said—*correctly*—that I had been handed a lion on a platter." But did she say that *to* him? I.e., "That is correct, Dennis." If so, it would be another masculine response. Or did she just *think* it to *herself* and record it for posterity? If so, that would be a feminine response. At issue, really, is "the farce." "The farce" to me and, I suspect, to Dennis was Mary's missing the easy shot and wasting everyone else's time and energy.

"The farce" to Mary, I suspect, was Papa and Dennis fooling her into thinking that she shot first. Logically, missing the easy shot and wasting everyone's time and energy have greater claim to the distinction of "farce" than does fooling her about whether or not she shot first. It is only the *first* farce that made the *second* farce necessary. Put another way, if Mary's complete hopelessness as a hunter wasn't the *central* farce, then they would all be obligated to continue hunting for Mary's lion, and Dennis and Papa would be at fault—and need to apologize—for shooting *her* lion. The fact that that did not happen obligated Mary to recognize that (one way or the other) the hunt for Mary's lion was over. In my opinion all she had needed to add to the *end* of her lunch-time speech was: "I'd like to apologize to you chaps for wasting everyone's time and energy these last few weeks," and before anyone could even suspect that she might want them to politely disagree, raise her glass, and say (very, very cheerfully), "Here's to dead lions." Which allows everyone to take the double meaning and let the whole thing drop without any loss of face or needless embarrassment on anyone's part. Which, among the guys, is on par with bagging a lion—finding a graceful way to let everyone off the hook when it looks as if any turn the conversation could take in the near future could lead to some kind of confrontation. I suspect, however, that this is a skill genetically confined to the masculine gender and completely foreign to the feminine gender, which tries to accomplish the same goals with tears, hugs, and brave smiles. How did the conversation proceed from there? Not well, judging by the next entry:

This evening I walked out to the Chui [leopard] *bait, still miserable. No Chui was there. Denis* [sic] *and Papa came along and I apologized for my lunch-time speech.*

To quote from "Short Happy Life...": *Now what in hell were you going to do about a man who talked like that, Wilson wondered.*

Apologized? Apologized for what? For doing the decent, manly thing and owning up to the fact that you, Mary, personally, transformed a long, sincere, serious, and purposeful pursuit into a farce? You finally do the right thing and *admit* to it, and *now* you want to *apologize* for admitting to it? It is exactly this sort of bait-and-switch tactic—switching from the farcical to the honorable-and-above-board and then into (what? Self-pity? I'm not sure) that makes men shake their heads when women talk about equality. To be forced into this kind of dishonorable state of commiseration with a lunatic because you're a *husband*—well, it goes with the territory ("for better or worse"? Buddy, you don't know the *half* of it, *yet*). But to suggest that gender interchangeability is "just around the corner" and that men and women are basically the same and just need to iron out a few little misunderstandings, well...as I say, men just shake their heads.

Husbands?

continued next issue